

## Telecommunications FAQs for Travelers to Cuba

### Will my U.S. mobile phone work in Cuba?

Not in most cases. Although many non-U.S. international mobile phone companies have roaming agreements with ETECSA (the Cuban national telecommunications company), U.S. carriers currently do not have such arrangements and do not yet provide roaming service in Cuba. However, Cubacel (ETECSA's mobile phone arm) allows visitors from the United States to rent a SIM card with pre-paid minutes in amounts of CUC 10, 20, or 40 (US\$10, \$20, or \$40), plus a daily rental fee for the SIM card of CUC 3 (US\$3) for use in your own phone. The phone must be a GSM unlocked phone. The per-minute call charges and texting fees for renting a mobile phone (as listed above) also apply to renting a SIM card. Contact your wireless provider to check whether your phone operates on the compatible standard and request that your carrier unlock your mobile phone.

### Can I buy or rent a mobile phone in the U.S. to use in Cuba?

Yes. There are some specialized mobile phone companies that provide travel phones for Cuba and other countries. Before you leave for Cuba, you can rent a compatible mobile phone from companies such as Cellular Abroad (offered by National Geographic), Cello Mobile, or Mobal for use in Cuba. In addition to daily rental fees, you should expect to pay approximately \$3 per minute of call time and up to \$1.50 per outgoing text message. Depending on the type of phone rented, data may also be available at an additional cost.

### Can I rent a mobile phone in Cuba to use in Cuba?

Yes. An alternative to renting a phone or SIM card in the U.S. is to rent a phone upon arrival in Cuba. Once you arrive in Cuba, you can rent a mobile phone from Cubacel, the mobile arm of ETECSA, the local phone company. There are Cubacel offices in Terminals #2 and #3 at José Martí International Airport in Havana. Cubacel charges a one-time refundable deposit of 100 Cuban convertible pesos (CUC) (US\$100), plus a daily fee of CUC 10 (US\$10). Additionally, you should expect to pay all of the applicable per-minute call charges – approximately CUC 0.35 (US\$0.35) per minute for calls within Cuba and CUC 1.85 (US\$1.85) per minute for calls to the United States. Outgoing text messages cost CUC 0.16 (US\$0.16) to send within Cuba and CUC 1 (US\$1.00) to send abroad, and data is not available.

### Can people in the U.S. call me in Cuba?

Yes, people in the United States can call you in Cuba if you are using an operating phone in Cuba (as discussed above, people in the U.S. cannot call you on your U.S. phone on a roaming basis). Prices for calls to Cuba from the U.S. vary and depend on the provider and the caller's plan. You should check with your provider about the cost of making a call to Cuba using its service prior to making the call as calling without an international calling plan or similar arrangement can cost several dollars per minute. To call from the United States, the caller will need to dial 011 (or + sign from a mobile phone), followed by 53 (Cuba's country code), followed by the Cuban phone number, which consists of six to eight digits for landlines (including the area code) or eight digits for mobile phones.

Example (calling Cuba from a U.S. landline): 011-53-5555-5555

Example (calling Cuba from a U.S. mobile phone): +53-5555-5555

## **How can I place phone calls to the U.S. from Cuba?**

### *Calling the U.S. from a landline in Cuba:*

To make landline phone calls from Cuba, you can buy a pre-paid calling card (available at certain hotels and resorts) for use at public payphones. To call the United States using a pre-paid calling card, follow these steps:

1. Dial 166, then dial the card code, followed by the hash key (#).
2. Dial 119 (the international line access code), then 1 (the U.S. country code).
3. Enter the ten-digit area code and phone number you wish to call, followed by the hash key.

Another option, although a more expensive one, is to place international phone calls from a hotel landline, either in your guest room or the lobby. On average, calls from a tourist hotel to the United States cost about US\$2.50 per minute. To call the United States from a hotel landline, dial 119, then 1, followed by the ten-digit area code and phone number.

### *Calling the U.S. from a Cuban mobile phone:*

To call the U.S. from Cuba using a mobile phone, use the same dialing format as calling from a hotel landline – dial 119, then 1, followed by the ten-digit area code and phone number.

## **Can I access the Internet in Cuba?**

In larger cities like Havana and Santiago de Cuba, ETECSA runs an increasing number of telepuntos, or small Internet cafés. You can purchase an access ticket at the telepuntos that will provide you with a username and password, allowing you to log on to the public computers and use the Internet by the minute or the hour. Internet access costs approximately \$4.50 per hour. Connection speeds vary widely and may not support voice or video calls.

Many of the larger hotels also have either a computer or business center where you can purchase Internet access at an average price of US\$6-\$10 per hour. You should check Internet availability and charges at your intended hotel before booking and travel.

## **Is there WiFi in Cuba?**

WiFi in Cuba is not yet widely available. A few major hotels offer WiFi at an hourly rate of approximately US\$6-\$10. Be sure to contact your hotel to verify availability, speed, and cost in advance of travel. Beginning in July 2015, Cuba intends to start offering WiFi at 35 government-run centers for \$2 per hour, as noted in the press.

## **Consumer Help Center**

For more information on consumer issues, visit the FCC's Consumer Help Center at <https://consumercomplaints.fcc.gov>



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